

What is claimed is

1. A method for providing a central information dissemination service that makes information available to the public, comprising:

registering electronic mail addresses at a central facility for different information disseminators that distribute promotional information;

storing, in a database at the central facility, the promotional information for each information disseminator in association with the electronic mail address of that information disseminator;

receiving an incoming electronic mail at the central facility, said incoming electronic mail addressed to one of the registered electronic mail addresses; and

creating in response to the incoming electronic mail, an outgoing electronic mail that is based on the promotional information associated with the registered electronic mail address of said incoming electronic mail.

2. The method of claim 1 further comprising publishing said one of the registered electronic mail addresses to inform the public of the availability of the promotional information that is associated with said one of the registered electronic mail addresses.

3. The method of claim 1 further comprising tracking activity of the registered electronic mail addresses.

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4. The method of claim 1 further comprising assigning a global tracking code to each registered electronic mail address

5. The method of claim 1 further comprising assigning an individual tracking code to the incoming electronic mail.

6. The method of claim 1 wherein the registering comprises registering different electronic mail addresses for one of said information disseminators that are each to be used for different advertisements having the same focus.

7. The method of claim 6 further comprises assigning a tracking code to each of said different electronic mail addresses that are to be used for said different advertisements having the same focus to track activity of said different electronic mail addresses across the different advertisements.

8. The method of claim 6 wherein the registering different electronic mail addresses comprises presenting said different advertisements to through different media.

9. The method of claim 8 further comprises assigning a tracking code to each of said different electronic mail addresses that are to be used for said different advertisements having the same focus to track activity of said different electronic mail addresses across the different media.

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11. The method of claim 1 further comprising generating a report based on how many of said incoming electronic mails have been received that are addressed to said one of the registered electronic mail addresses.

13. The method of claim 12 further comprising screening said requests.

15. The method of claim 14 further comprising sending a follow-up electronic mail to said one of the electronic mail addresses.

17. The method of claim 1 wherein the creating comprises including an order form in said outgoing electronic mail.

18. The method of claim 1 further comprising displaying an electronic banner that can be selected to automatically create said incoming electronic mail.

19. The method of claim 1 further comprising displaying an electronic link that can be selected to automatically create said incoming electronic mail.

20. The method of claim 1 further comprising providing to an information requestor that sent said incoming electronic mail, a selectable option for downloading a software program that displays a selectable icon that automatically populates a portion of an electronic mail address field.

21. The method of claim 1 further comprising providing to an information requestor that sent said incoming electronic mail, a selectable option for referring future ones of said outgoing electronic mail to other electronic mail addresses.

22. The method of claim 1 further comprising providing to an information requestor that sent said incoming electronic mail, a selectable option to store personal information at the central facility.

23. The method of claim 1 further comprising providing to an information requestor that sent said incoming electronic mail from their user equipment, a selectable option for creating a folder for storing said outgoing electronic mail on said user equipment.

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24. The method of claim 1 further comprising logging an information requestor that sent said incoming electronic mail into the central facility to review said outgoing electronic mail.

25. The method of claim 1 further comprising providing to an information requestor that sent said incoming electronic mail, a selectable option to receive access to past ones of said outgoing electronic mail.

26. The method of claim 1 further comprising determining whether user equipment from which said incoming electronic mail was sent is capable of displaying graphics in said outgoing electronic mail.

27. The method of claim 1 wherein the creating comprises including graphics in said outgoing electronic mail.

28. The method of claim 1 further comprising attaching a file to said outgoing electronic mail.

29. The method of claim 1 further comprising receiving the promotional information for one of said information disseminators for storing the promotional information in said database.

30. The method of claim 1 further comprising giving the information disseminators access to said database.

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generating cumulative tracking  
information for said one of said registered electronic  
mail addresses; and

32. The method of claim 1 further comprising:

forming a communications connection with one of said information disseminators to access the cumulative tracking information.

33. The method of claim 1 wherein the creating comprises configuring said outgoing electronic mail to return information on actions taken when said outgoing electronic mail is received.

34. The method of claim 1 wherein the receiving comprises receiving said incoming electronic mail that includes a security code.

35. The method of claim 1 wherein the storing comprises providing in the promotional information for one of said information disseminators an electronic mail template.

36. The method of claim 34 wherein the creating comprises using said electronic mail template to create said outgoing electronic mail.

37. The method of claim 35 wherein the creating comprises inserting an individual tracking code in portions of said electronic mail template to create said outgoing electronic mail.

38. The method of claim 35 wherein the creating comprises inserting in said electronic mail template an individual tracking code to replace instances of symbol "~" in said electronic mail template.

39. A central information dissemination system that makes information available to the public, comprising:

means for registering electronic mail addresses at a central facility for different information disseminators that distribute promotional information;

means for storing, in a database at the central facility, the promotional information for each information disseminator in association with the electronic mail address of that information disseminator;

means for receiving an incoming electronic mail at the central facility, said incoming electronic mail addressed to one of the registered electronic mail addresses; and

means for creating in response to the incoming electronic mail, an outgoing electronic mail

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that is based on the promotional information associated with the registered electronic mail address of said incoming electronic mail.

40. The system of claim 36 further comprising means for publishing said one of the registered electronic mail addresses to inform the public of the availability of the promotional information that is associated with that one of the registered electronic mail addresses.

41. The system of claim 36 further comprising means for tracking activity of the registered electronic mail addresses.

42. The system of claim 36 further comprising means for assigning a global tracking code to each registered electronic mail address

43. The system of claim 36 further comprising means for assigning an individual tracking code to the incoming electronic mail.

44. The system of claim 36 wherein the means for registering comprises means for registering different electronic mail addresses for one of said information disseminators that are each to be used for different advertisements having the same focus.

45. The system of claim 44 further comprises means for assigning a tracking code to each of said different electronic mail addresses that are to be used for said different advertisements having the same focus

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to track activity of said different electronic mail addresses across the different advertisements.

46. The system of claim 44 wherein the means for registering different electronic mail addresses comprises means for presenting said different advertisements through different media.

47. The system of claim 46 further comprises means for assigning a tracking code to each of said different electronic mail addresses that are to be used for said different advertisements having the same focus to track activity of said different electronic mail addresses across the different media.

48. The system of claim 36 further comprising means for generating a report based on receiving said incoming electronic mail.

49. The system of claim 36 further comprising means for generating a report based on how many of said incoming electronic mails have been received that are addressed to said one of the registered electronic mail addresses.

50. The system of claim 36 further comprising means for receiving requests to register said electronic mail addresses.

51. The system of claim 50 further comprising means for screening said requests.

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52. The system of claim 36 further comprising means for sending said outgoing electronic mail.

53. The system of claim 52 further comprising means for sending a follow-up electronic mail to said one of the electronic mail addresses.

54. The system of claim 36 further comprising means for sending a fee required electronic mail that includes a link for paying a fee to receive said outgoing electronic mail.

55. The system of claim 36 wherein the means for creating comprises means for including an order form in said outgoing electronic mail.

56. The system of claim 36 further comprising means for displaying an electronic banner that can be selected to automatically create said incoming electronic mail.

57. The system of claim 36 further comprising means for displaying an electronic link that can be selected to automatically create said incoming electronic mail.

58. The system of claim 36 further comprising means for providing to an information requestor that sent said incoming electronic mail, a selectable option for downloading a software program that displays a selectable icon that automatically

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59. The system of claim 36 further comprising means for providing to an information requestor that sent said incoming electronic mail, a selectable option for referring future ones of said outgoing electronic mail to other electronic mail addresses.

61. The system of claim 36 further comprising means for providing to an information requestor that sent said incoming electronic mail from their user equipment, a selectable option for creating a folder for storing said outgoing electronic mail on said user equipment.

63. The system of claim 36 further comprising means for providing to an information requestor that sent said incoming electronic mail, a

64. The system of claim 36 further comprising means for determining whether user equipment from which said incoming electronic mail was sent is capable of displaying graphics in said outgoing electronic mail.

66. The system of claim 36 further comprising means for attaching a file to said outgoing electronic mail.

68. The system of claim 36 further comprising means for giving the information disseminators access to said database.

69. The system of claim 36 further comprising:

means for generating cumulative tracking information for said one of said registered electronic mail addresses; and



76. The system of claim 74 wherein the means for creating comprises means for inserting in said electronic mail template an individual tracking code to replace instances of symbol "~" in said electronic mail template.

register electronic mail addresses at for  
different information disseminators that distribute  
promotional information;

receive an incoming electronic mail, said incoming electronic mail addressed to one of the registered electronic mail addresses; and

78. The system of claim 77 further comprises media used to publish said one of the registered electronic mail addresses to inform the public of the

availability of the promotional information that is associated with that one of the registered electronic mail addresses.

79. The system of claim 77 wherein the central facility is configured to track activity of the registered electronic mail addresses.

80. The system of claim 77 wherein the central facility is configured to assign a global tracking code to each registered electronic mail address

81. The system of claim 77 wherein the central facility is configured to assign an individual tracking code to the incoming electronic mail.

82. The system of claim 77 wherein the central facility is configured to register different electronic mail addresses for one of said information disseminators that are each to be used for different advertisements having the same focus.

83. The system of claim 82 wherein the central facility is configured to assign a tracking code to each of said different electronic mail addresses that are to be used for said different advertisements having the same focus to track activity of said different electronic mail addresses across the different advertisements.

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84. The system of claim 82 further comprising different media used for publishing each of said different advertisements.

85. The system of claim 84 wherein the central facility is configured to assign a tracking code to each of said different electronic mail addresses that are to be used for said different advertisements having the same focus to track activity of said different electronic mail addresses across the different media.

86. The system of claim 77 wherein the central facility is configured to generate a report based on receiving said incoming electronic mail.

87. The system of claim 77 wherein the central facility is configured to generate a report based on how many of said incoming electronic mails have been received that are addressed to said one of the registered electronic mail addresses.

88. The system of claim 77 wherein the central facility is configured to receive requests to register said electronic mail addresses.

89. The system of claim 88 wherein the central facility is configured to screen said requests.

90. The system of claim 77 wherein the central facility is configured to send said outgoing electronic mail.

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97. The system of claim 77 wherein the central facility is configured to provide to an information requestor that sent said incoming electronic mail, a selectable option for referring future ones of said outgoing electronic mail to other electronic mail addresses.

98. The system of claim 77 wherein the central facility is configured to provide to an information requestor that sent said incoming electronic mail, a selectable option to store personal information at the central facility.

99. The system of claim 77 wherein the central facility is configured to provide to an information requestor that sent said incoming electronic mail from their user equipment, a selectable option for creating a folder for storing said outgoing electronic mail on said user equipment.

100. The system of claim 77 wherein the central facility is configured to log an information requestor that sent said incoming electronic mail into the central facility to review said outgoing electronic mail.

101. The system of claim 77 wherein the central facility is configured to provide to an information requestor that sent said incoming electronic mail, a selectable option to receive access to past ones of said outgoing electronic mail.

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102. The system of claim 77 wherein the central facility is configured to determine whether user equipment from which said incoming electronic mail was sent is capable of displaying graphics in said outgoing electronic mail.

103. The system of claim 77 wherein the central facility is configured to include graphics in said outgoing electronic mail.

104. The system of claim 77 wherein the central facility is configured to attach a file to said outgoing electronic mail.

105. The system of claim 77 wherein the central facility is configured to receive the promotional information for one of said information disseminators for storing the promotional information in said database.

106. The system of claim 77 wherein the central facility is configured to give the information disseminators access to said database.

107. The system of claim 77 wherein the central facility is configured to:

generate cumulative tracking information for said one of said registered electronic mail addresses; and

form a communications connection with one of said information disseminators to access the cumulative tracking information.

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113. The system of claim 112 wherein the central facility is configured to insert an individual tracking code in portions of said electronic mail template to create said outgoing electronic mail.

114. The system of claim 112 wherein the central facility is configured to insert in said electronic mail template an individual tracking code to replace instances of symbol "~" in said electronic mail template.

115. A method comprising:

registering electronic mail addresses each of which has (1) a fixed portion, which serves as a global identifier for a central information dissemination service, and (2) a code portion, said code portion of each electronic mail address being associated with particular subject matter and associated with information related to that particular subject matter that one of a plurality of information disseminators is to disseminate;

publishing one of said code portions in connection with said particular subject matter with which that code portion is associated; and

disseminating, by said information disseminator service on behalf of said one of said plurality of information disseminators, said information associated with said published one of said code portions.

116. The method of claim 115 further comprising receiving an incoming electronic mail at the central information disseminator service, said incoming electronic mail being addressed to one of said registered electronic mail addresses.

117. The method of claim 116 wherein the disseminating comprises creating in response to the

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means for publishing one of said code portions in connection with said particular subject matter with which that code portion is associated; and

125. The system of claim 124 further

126. The system of claim 125 wherein the

means for disseminating comprises means for creating in response to the incoming electronic mail, an outgoing electronic mail that is based on the information associated with said one of said registered electronic mail addresses.

133. A system comprising:  
a central facility at which a software application has been implemented to configure the central facility to register electronic mail addresses each of which has (1) a fixed portion, which serves as



media for publishing one of said code portions in connection with said particular subject matter with which that code portion is associated; and

134. The system of claim 133 wherein the central facility is configured to receive an incoming electronic mail, said incoming electronic mail being addressed to one of said registered electronic mail addresses.

136. The method of claim 134 wherein the central facility is configured to track individual tracking information related to said incoming electronic mail.

138. The system of claim 133 wherein the central facility is configured to register said electronic mail addresses that each have a same second-level domain name for said fixed portion.

140. The system of claim 133 wherein the central facility is configured to associate the information related to one of said particular subject matter with more than one of said registered electronic mail addresses.

142. A machine-readable storage medium encoded with a set of machine executable instructions for using a central facility to perform a method for providing a central information dissemination service that makes information available to the public, comprising:



146. The machine-readable storage medium of claim 142 wherein the registering comprises registering different electronic mail addresses for one of said information disseminators that are each to be used for different advertisements having the same focus.

147. The machine-readable storage medium of claim 142 wherein said method further comprises assigning a tracking code to each of said different electronic mail addresses that are to be used for said different advertisements having the same focus to track activity of said different electronic mail addresses across the different advertisements.

148. The machine-readable storage medium of claim 142 wherein said method further comprises assigning a tracking code to each of said different electronic mail addresses that are to be used for said different advertisements having the same focus to track activity of said different electronic mail addresses across the different media.

149. The machine-readable storage medium of claim 142 wherein said method further comprises generating a report based on receiving said incoming electronic mail.

150. The machine-readable storage medium of claim 142 wherein said method further comprises generating a report based on how many of said incoming electronic mails have been received that are addressed to said one of the registered electronic mail addresses.

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152. The machine-readable storage medium of claim 151 wherein said method further comprises screening said requests.

154. The machine-readable storage medium of claim 153 wherein said method further comprises sending a follow-up electronic mail to said one of the electronic mail addresses.

156. The machine-readable storage medium of claim 142 wherein the creating comprises including an order form in said outgoing electronic mail.

157. The machine-readable storage medium of claim 142 wherein said method further comprises displaying an electronic banner that can be selected to automatically create said incoming electronic mail.

158. The machine-readable storage medium of claim 142 wherein said method further comprises displaying an electronic link that can be selected to automatically create said incoming electronic mail.

159. The machine-readable storage medium of claim 142 wherein said method further comprises providing to an information requestor that sent said incoming electronic mail, a selectable option for downloading a software program that displays a selectable icon that automatically populates a portion of an electronic mail address field.

160. The machine-readable storage medium of claim 142 wherein said method further comprises providing to an information requestor that sent said incoming electronic mail, a selectable option for referring future ones of said outgoing electronic mail to other electronic mail addresses.

161. The machine-readable storage medium of claim 142 wherein said method further comprises providing to an information requestor that sent said incoming electronic mail, a selectable option to store personal information at the central facility.

162. The machine-readable storage medium of claim 142 wherein said method further comprises providing to an information requestor that sent said incoming electronic mail from their user equipment, a selectable option for creating a folder for storing said outgoing electronic mail on said user equipment.

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170. The machine-readable storage medium of claim 142 wherein said method further comprises:

forming a communications connection with one of said information disseminators to access the cumulative tracking information.

generating tracking information for said incoming electronic mail; and

172. The machine-readable storage medium of claim 142 wherein the creating comprises configuring said outgoing electronic mail to return information on actions taken when said outgoing electronic mail is received.

173. The machine-readable storage medium of claim 142 wherein the receiving comprises receiving said incoming electronic mail that includes a security code.



